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Retrospective Review and Contemporary Development of the Reggio Emilia Early Childhood Educational System: An Interview with Carolyn Pope Edwards

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On Educational Values

Ren: *Thanks for accepting out invitation. Nowadays, early childhood educators and professionals all around the world have realized that there is no educational ideas/approaches/philosophies that can stay static. This also applies to the Reggio approach. However, in the mist of various changes, the core of the educational approach usually stays consistent. Can you talk about the core values of the Reggio educational approach? How do these values deeply influence the educational system in Reggio Emilia?*

Edwards: The Reggio Emilia educators have provided a clear and recent statement of their core principles in the book, *Indications: Preschools and Infant-Toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia* (2010), now translated into Chinese by Nanjing Normal University Press (2015). These values have been explicit and strongly guiding since the 1950s and 1960s, and one hears them over and over in discussions with Reggio educators. Here is the list of Principles of the Educational Project:

Children are active protagonists in their growth and development processes
The hundred languages
Participation
Listening
Learning as a process of individual and group construction
Educational research
Educational documentation
Progettazione
Organization
Environment, spaces, and relations
Professional development
Assessment

Rather than discussing all of them, let me talk about one I find particularly interesting and important, *participation*. In Italian schools, the relationship between schools and families is generally referred to with the term "participation", rather than the US term "involvement." This is the case even though a cognate of the English word "involvement" (*coinvolgimento*) is available to them. In all of the writings on Italian early childhood education, even to this day, the term participation recurs over and over, incorporating the whole spectrum of meanings that in our opinion are covered by American terms: involvement, engagement, partnership.

Ren: *It seems that the word "participation" conveys broader meanings than the word "involvement." In what sense is "participation" broader than "involvement?"*

Edwards: "Participation" is broader, implying that not only parents and teachers, but also other members of the community participate. It also covers all forms and levels

of participation and contribution, without distinction, and frames issues connected to diversity in terms of multiple perspectives and invitations to dialogue. Reggio educators speak frequently of participation when talking about parent and citizen participation and the value of democracy. They regard respect for children as recognizing them from the first years of life as members of a permanent social group of citizens with their own rights before the law and the community, including a right to be “heard.” Participation encompasses both the ideas of control and cooperation of citizens of the community in establishing and running the early childhood system and the daily practices connecting school with family and with the outside community, such as transition practices, meetings with group of parents, and broader initiatives.

Ren: *Can you talk about how the culture and practice of participation may shape parents’ view of their child and themselves as parents?*

Edwards: No answer is better than parents’ own words for this question. The following two quotations from parents in Reggio Emilia suggest the emotional value that parents derive from participating on advisory boards and contributing in other ways to the life of the school. These quotations come from the *Charter of the City and Childhood Councils*, 2002 (pp. 9, 25, and 34):

“For me it’s a looking for growth through times of shared reflection, through opportunities for exchange, comparing points of view, taking our reflections further, so that I am closer to my child as a parent, so that we grow together as people.”

“It’s a personal development, sharing points of view, friendship, wanting to help do things, telling our stories; because if we parents talk about ourselves a bit then that helps the teachers in their work with our children which is of primary importance to all of us. It shows us that not everything is necessarily owed to us, and if we can learn that, we can pass it on to our children for their growth and future.

“I understand participation in the City and Childhood Council to be an assumption of responsibility . . . which comes from the civic sense of belonging and contributing to a civilized community—collective—society.”

Ren: *In the last quotation, that parent seemed to be talking about participation as a basic right and responsibility as a citizen in general, which goes beyond his/her family and his/her child’s school context. I can hardly imagine a parent from China would make such comments that sound so political.*

Edwards: Interestingly, the concept of citizen participation is actually enshrined in the Italian Constitution (Article 3,) which speaks of the duty of the state to remove economic and social obstacles that constrain “the freedom and equality of citizens, thereby impeding the full development of the human person and the effective participation of all workers in the political, economic, and social organization of the

country" (Graziano Delrio, 2012, Chapter 4 in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 3rd Edition). Thus, the word participation has a deep resonance in the Italian language related to the fundamental rights and dignity of persons before the law, perhaps in the same way that the phrase, "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," speaks to Americans. Participation is not merely a means to an end, but an ultimate end, or good, in itself. While Italy is not as collectivistic a society as, for example, China or Korea, neither is it as individualistic as the United States; community and social belonging are strongly valued.

Ren: *Today's society is developing rapidly. Even China, as a widely acknowledged collective society, is becoming more and more individualistic. Do you think participation in Reggio Emilia has been declining as a result of global changes?*

Edwards: Since the post-War era, Italian society has undergone many changes, some of them parallel to changes and transformations in other Western societies, such as decline in the birth rate, longer life expectancy, and increasing immigration from outside and hence increasing diversity of the population. Thus the conditions originally generating a culture of parent participation in education have been altered in Reggio Emilia. However, the idea or ideal of parent participation in early childhood systems has not collapsed in the face of these societal and economic changes, but rather has shown its capacity to adapt to new cultural and social situations. The systems of advisory committees, set up originally to provide a voice in the running of schools for outsiders (women and working classes) have readily lent themselves into vehicles for giving new kinds of outsiders a way to participate and have a voice.

Indeed, in our experience, Italians seem to enjoy the very process of gathering together, with everyone eventually contributing some idea to the discussion and listening politely to others. I have attended some of these meetings, lasting until late at night! They have a serious quality, but the people clearly know and enjoy one another, and often share delicious refreshments and personal stories. Young children in preschool also learn the art of cordial interaction. They master the art of *discussione* ("debate," or "discussion," involving humor, stock references, and other stylized verbal flourishes, not escalating into serious conflict) to joyfully match wits with their peers.

Today, in Reggio Emilia, new groups of immigrant families, and new generations of young parents, want their aspirations to be heard and recognized in different ways than in years past, but it is still possible for educators, parents, and citizens to create forums to listen closely to one another and be responsive to the felt needs of parents of today.

On Curriculum and Teaching

Ren: *When mentioning the curriculum and teaching of the Reggio educational*

approach, people usually think about the concepts of project, negotiated learning, documentation, and the pedagogy of listening. Can you talk about the relationships among these concepts from the perspective of the curriculum and teaching embedded in the Reggio educational approach? Can you talk about some newly emerging ideas, thoughts, and methods that Reggio educators have been thinking/experimenting in terms of curriculum and teaching?

Edwards: These terms do have meanings that overlap, so can be confusing. Each term emphasizes a different aspect of a general approach to all educational work, which the Reggio educators call *Progettazione*. There is no single English word that is a good translation for *progettazione*, and so different writers have used various terms. We could say, “flexible planning,” or “planning without predetermined endpoint.” As Carlina Rinaldi (1998) has written, as this applies to curriculum, “The curriculum is at once defined and undefined, structured and unstructured, based more on flexible strategies than rigid plans. But actually the concept can be applied to other kinds of planning, too, for example, designing a space, or organizing an end-of-the-year celebration. Flexible planning can apply to any aspect of curriculum or life of the school, and always involves multiple voices in the decision-making.

Ren: *So all these concepts actually fall under the umbrella of Progettazione. It is interesting that no single Chinese word can fully capture the meaning of Progettazione, either.*

Edwards: Regarding curriculum, *progettazione* has two sides or aspects. In its strongest aspect it is seen in long-term *projects* involving a whole classroom or school, or even many schools together. But the other side is the everyday *pedagogy of listening*, as discussed so vividly in Rinaldi’s Chapter 13 of *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 3rd edition, where we learn about teachers helping children find meaning in what they do, what they encounter, and what they experience, in “ordinary moments” that are not necessarily part of a long-term project. Many of the famous booklets and stories from Reggio Emilia do involve long-term projects, such as “Shadow Stories,” “The City in the Rain,” “The Portrait of a Lion,” and so on. But we can find just as much in their publications about the ordinary moments, the small stories, such as are so beautifully captured in *The Diary of Laura*, edited by Carolyn Edwards and Carlina Rinaldi (2009; the Chinese version will be published by Nanjing Normal University Press in 2016 or 2017). You might remember the memorable mini-story of “Laura and the watch,” where the baby poses the hypothesis of whether a magazine image might also make the ticking sound of the watch on her teacher’s wrist. The fact is, a long-term project is composed of countless “ordinary moments.” Conversely, out of particularly powerful ordinary moments, a long-term projects may emerge.

Both of these aspects would fit with the American concept of *emergent curriculum*, a term used by many American child-centered educators such as Debbie Carter and

John Nimmo. George Forman, however, prefers the term, *negotiated curriculum*, which he and Brenda Fyfe explain in Chapter 14 of our book. In my own view, the term, emergent curriculum, captures the idea that the curriculum is not rigidly planned in advance, but rather “arises” or “emerges” based on the listening process. The term, negotiated curriculum, in contrast, captures the centrality of the social, that is, co-constructivist nature of the educational process, the multiple voices. As Forman and Fyfe wrote, “In negotiated learning, the teachers seek to uncover the children’s beliefs, assumptions, or theories about the way the physical or social world works... Their analysis reveals the reasons behind the children’s interest... In this co-constructivist curriculum, the teachers form a community of learners with the children and with the parents and other teachers.” So teachers must work together to make sense of children’s words and actions.

Ren: *It is interesting to reflect on the subtleties embedded in these different terms. What about documentation? When thinking about documentation, many people think about the final products, as they are more visible. But it is much more than that,*

Edwards: As we think about the thoughtful work required of educators who are doing flexible planning, or negotiated curriculum, we come to the concept of *documentation*. This term, documentation, refers to both process and products. The *process* includes a cycle of two or more teachers asking an educational question, then observing and recording (that is, gathering evidence and artifacts of what happens in the classroom), then analyzing and reflecting on them, interpreting and evaluating what they mean, then planning next steps and asking new questions, while always finding ways to communicate to children and adults what has happened. This documentation process “makes learning visible” to the children, to the teachers, to other adults including families and visitors, through the preparation of *documentation products* (i.e. documentation pages, panels, booklets, DVDs, notecards, and other formats), those beautiful pieces revealing the creativity of teachers and their respect for children.

On the Role of Teachers/Teacher Professional Development

Ren: *You have a lot of knowledge and insight about the role of teachers in the Reggio educational system. Teacher professional development has a long history in the Reggio Emilia educational system, and it is also constantly evolving. Can you take us back to the beginning and talk about how Reggio educators approach teacher professional development?*

Edwards: Loris Malaguzzi, the founding director of the Reggio Emilia system of public early childhood education, believed that teachers, like children and everyone else, feel the need to grow in their competencies because they seek to become active interpreters of what is happening in their classrooms. They feel a need to make predictions, to try things out, and then interpret them. The act of interpretation is most

important. Teachers engage in studying and interpreting ongoing process, rather than waiting to evaluate results.

Ren: *How do teachers learn to do this, and have the processes of professional development changed over the years?*

Edwards: In the beginning days, right after World War II, the educators were working against the old traditions of educating young children that were based on teacher-centered practices, simple routines, and prescribed repetitive games, rather than exploration of materials and the environment in creative ways and representing them with expressive tools and materials. Starting in the late 1980s, the world began to discover that there was an experience of great interest developing in Reggio Emilia. It was not a “method,” but rather an “approach,” a general way of thinking, observing, discussing, projecting, and experimenting.

This approach was always to be rooted in the local context. It was not based on a set curriculum or pre-defined path, but rather on critical, open-minded scrutiny of the quality of environment, materials, and interactions-- a continuous research, construction, and re-construction of knowledge made visible through observation and documentation. From the time the first city schools for young children opened in 1963, Malaguzzi was deeply aware of the need to win trust and respect from parents and the citizens of Reggio Emilia.

Ren: *I wonder how Malaguzzi got started on this ambitious vision?*

His strategy in those early years was to build on the experience teachers had gained as part of the cooperative schools started by parents at the end of Second World War in 1945. At the same time, Malaguzzi sought to learn about what was happening in education outside of Italy, in particular in Geneva, Switzerland, where Piaget was active. He opened up to teachers, parents, and citizens new kinds of learning experiences and conferences, for example, bringing in the Italian, Gianni Rodari, to lecture on fantasy, imagination, and storytelling with children, and David Hawkins, Lilian Katz, and others from the USA in 1990 for a conference on the Potentials and Rights of Children.

This concept of professional development as shared construction among teachers and as public experience with parents and citizens went on to include many cultural initiatives, for instance, taking advantage of scholarly lectures, public theater productions, musical performances, or artistic exhibits that could provide enlightening experiences for adults, or for adults together with children. What started in the early history of the public preschools in Reggio continued on with the same goals, acquiring increasing participation by local educators and eventually reaching out to educators from many parts of the world.

Ren: *What challenges do Reggio educators face today to cultivate strong professionalism in teachers? How have they dealt with the challenges?*

Edwards: In recent years, Reggio Emilia has seen an influx of new teachers, and this has led to some innovations in the process of new teacher induction. In some cases, four or five new teachers were placed in an infant-toddler center or preschool, but still there were at least that many experienced teachers there to communicate to them the spirit and messages of the place. At one point, intensive professional development retreats were also organized for new teachers at the beginning of the school year and on other occasions. They also undertook an experiment with “tutor” or mentor teachers who provide a situation of reciprocal professional development in various preschools or infant-toddler centers. The mentors move from their home schools into the new situations. They are not expected to behave like little professors or transmit the “true” message; instead, their role is to encourage and enrich dialogue and the exchange of ideas. Such mentoring is a delicate and difficult role and requires a balanced approach between being the one who introduces ideas and the one who responds to them. The mentors bring with them their experiences at their former schools but become open to broadened horizons, realizing that something that they have done in a particular way at their old school can also be done in a different way. This opens up a larger landscape of possibilities for all.

In general, the process of ongoing professional development for all the teachers continues to evolve in Reggio Emilia due to the increasing complexity of the system of services. There are now three cross-cutting or “transversal” pedagogisti who coordinate the pedagogical system throughout its entire complexity. These transversals are responsible for the pedagogical coordination within the city of Reggio Emilia and for the professional development of the staff. They are also responsible for collaboration with other educational initiatives in the city and the Emilia Romagna region. The administrators have worked closely to conceive and lead a transformation of the professional development system that they call a “diffuse pedagogical system.” This “diffuse system” of professional development is not designed for linear, top-down transmission, but instead creates many collegial zones of knowledge creation and exchange. Competences are deepened and enlarged in a forum that ideally promotes learning between older and younger generations, across job categories, and around pedagogical issues of enduring concern.

This new system amplifies tendencies of past years and sharpens earlier emphases, yet also reveals the capacity of the Reggio early childhood system to evolve and adapt to new conditions and challenges. It acts to save what was accumulated through decades of work and could be put at risk by staff turnover, and gives new responsibilities to educators with the deepest roots and expertise.

Ren: *I think that you are describing the changes in the processes and organization of how teachers work. But how about their **content** focus? Are teachers focusing on any*

new themes as they respond to contemporary life styles and concerns?

Edwards: Throughout all this time, the role of the teacher in Reggio Emilia focuses on *progettazione* and the “pedagogy of listening.” As explained already, the pedagogy of listening means helping children find meaning in what they do, what they encounter, and what they experience. In the Reggio preschools today, we see broad inquiry on topics of child well-being, such as food, nutrition, cooking, and healthy eating. We also see more emphasis on topics of ecology, such as children’s relationships with nature and the outdoors, and on the relation of living plants and growing of food to the emotional and physical nourishment of human beings. In the design of new buildings, we see collaboration with young architects and explicit elements to bring the outside in and take the inside out. We find booklets/documentation of projects where children investigate plants, the sea, the air, and consider the future of the earth. We see innovations related to topics of aesthetics and digital media, particularly technology with children. Finally, regarding inclusion of children with special rights due to their disabilities or unique learning needs, we also see change. Today, educators actively seek to strengthen relationships with community physicians and health providers to increase quantity and quality of inclusive participation. They also seek to learn about new therapies compatible with their relational approach to pedagogy, and to understand the seeming increase in certain conditions such as autistic spectrum disorders. While we still see documentation about long-term projects, today much professional development focuses on infusing quality into ordinary moments, not only in infant-toddler centers and preschools but also in laboratories, city-wide events, and all sorts of learning encounters relevant to every age, from young to old.

On Atelier and Atelierista

Ren: *Since the 1960s, Reggio Emilia has been putting an atelier in every preschool, along with placing a teacher with an art background. Have there been changes in the function and value of atelier compared to when ateliers were first introduced?*

Edwards: You are correct that in the 1960s, Loris Malaguzzi introduced an atelier into every preschool in Reggio Emilia, along with a special teacher, atelierista, with an art background. The atelierista coordinates with the other adults in the school to organize children’s and teachers’ experience, and serves as editor and designer of the documentation of the work done in the school. This was an innovative and courageous choice, according to Vea Vecchi’s (2012) Chapter 17 in the *Hundred Languages of Children*, 3rd Ed. It was a choice for the importance attributed to imagination, creativity, expressiveness, and aesthetics in the educational process.

From the beginning the atelier has served two functions, according to Vecchi. First, it provides a place for children to master techniques in multiple symbolic formats, such as drawing, painting, collage, and working in clay. Second, it provides a place to help

teachers study and understand processes of how children learn. In this way, it serves to shake up old-fashioned teaching ideas and introduces innovation into their work.

Ren: *What were Malaguzzi's intentions?*

Edwards: The work in the atelier is part of the entire educational approach, and intended to support and strengthen it. Usually, visual and expressive education (the arts) have a marginal place in schools, but the atelier and atelierista offered something entirely different, the possibility to allow children to get something beyond an education based on words and meaningless rituals. They also wanted teachers to be able to observe and discover theories about children starting from their first scribbles and going forward. As Malaguzzi said, "The atelier, in our approach, is an additional space within the school where to explore with our hands and our minds, where to refine our sight through the practice of the visual arts, where to work on projects connected with the activities planned in the classroom, where to explore and combine new and well-known tools, techniques, and materials."

Ren: *In this sense, the purpose of an atelier is not so much about learning how to do art, but a way to encourage children to use their one hundred languages in learning. How have ateliers evolved all these years?*

Edwards: Vea Vecchi was the first atelierista to work with Malaguzzi, and she introduced many others to the role. Two of them, Mara Davoli and Giovanni Piazza, have written about the evolution of the atelier in a book called *In the Spirit of the Studio* by Gandini, Hill, Cadwell, & Schwall (2005). Mara describes all of the intense experimentation that took place in the early days. People would share, "I've done this, and I interpret what happened this way. What do you think?" For example, under Malaguzzi's encouragement, they broadened their focus from drawing and clay sculpture to other mediums, and today that includes even photography, using a webcam, photoediting, and videoproduction on the part of the children, guided by the atelierista.

Mara tells how one group of teachers in the early days prepared a series of charts on materials and their qualities as well as suggestions on how to choose among the variety offered in stores. Another group studied how the atelier and other spaces were used in the school, mapping where children spent time and which spaces were under- or over-utilized. On the basis of their systematic study, the whole system added *mini-ateliers* to the classrooms. Vea Vecchi relates how when renovating the Diana School, the design project created classrooms containing a large spaces containing all the children, and a small space (mini-atelier) containing large quantities of materials for working with different techniques, acoustically but not visually separate from the large space. (This can be seen in the floor plan of the Diana School found in Lella Gandini's Chapter 17 of our book). Giovanni Piazza at La Viletta School led many experiments on materials, and how these materials come alive as "relationships" and

“languages” in children’s development. Today teachers speak about children “in dialogue” with materials.

Other educators engaged in cultural projects extending beyond the schools and the exhibit, for example, exploring the art of Alberto Burri, to help project the whole community into the future rather than just staying static or regressing—creatively producing culture and not just repeating it.. These are just examples—not exhaustive—to suggest how the atelier is a concept that evolves over times as philosophy and practice evolve.

Ren: *What are some of the most recent innovations?*

Edwards: If you visit the Loris Malaguzzi International Center today, you will see two new striking experiments. One is the *Ray of Light Atelier*, a place where light in its various forms can be investigated through explorations that inspire wonder and curiosity and stimulate creativity and deeper inquiry. It is also a place for conducting research into new ways of teaching science. The Atelier proposes educational experiences for schools of all levels, Sundays open to families, guided visits and hands-on workshops.

You will also encounter there a place called, *Pause – Atelier of Tastes*, a unique restaurant thought of as a project that draws from the experience in the kitchens of the infant-toddler centers and preschools of Reggio Emilia. The cuisine is based on the “excellence of the raw materials, on preparation with the utmost respect for the characteristics of the products, on tradition and innovation, local and seasonal food, and nutritional biodiversity.” In the schools today, children and families share in exploring topics around food from the very beginning of growing to, to preparing and enjoying its taste and healthful benefits.

I should also mention, *Remida, The Creative Recycling Centre*, a place not inside the Malaguzzi International Center but under the umbrella of Reggio Children, that promotes the idea throughout the city and among all ages that materials thought of as “useless waste” can be priceless resources. The Centre collects materials (e.g. unsold stock and scrap materials, such as paper, cardboard, ceramic, paint, cord, leather, wood, rubber, metal, plastic) from businesses, and then organizes, displays, and distributes them to teachers of infant-toddler centers and preschools, elementary, middle, and secondary schools, as well as to educational and cultural associations, senior citizens' centers, sheltered workshops for the disabled, recreation centers, and so on. The aim is to foster ecological ethics and respect for the earth; to give value to rejected materials, imperfect products, and otherwise “worthless” objects by reinventing their use and meaning; and to foster new opportunities for communication, creativity, and invention.

Documentation and Assessment

Ren: *In Reggio educational system, educational evaluation/assessment and documentation are closely connected. Please talk about the importance of documentation from the perspective of educational evaluation/assessment.*

Edwards: In current American usage, assessment is understood as a procedure used to measure the degree to which an individual possesses a certain attribute or skill. Formal assessments can include readiness tests, developmental screening tests and diagnostic tests. Informal assessments can include direct observation, use of interviews, anecdotal records, checklists, and collecting samples of children's work.

The concept of documentation, in contrast, as used in the early childhood programs of Reggio Emilia, is a procedure used to make learning visible, so that it can be recalled, revisited, reconstructed, interpreted, and reinterpreted, as a basis for decision-making (Brenda Fyfe, 2012, in Chapter 15 in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 3rd Ed). It is also usually group-oriented, that is, focused on what children do in interaction with other children or adults. While documentation may reveal what a child knows or can do, the point of it is really to show and study the learning paths that children are taking and processes they are using in their search for meaning. Documentation is a tool for helping teachers and children analyze and reflect on prior experience; listen to each other's ideas, theories, insights, and understandings; and then make decisions together about future learning paths. Thus, it is not a tool for measurement. As Brenda Fyfe notes, measurement seeks exact quantitative results. Documentation may consist of "traces of learning," but does not involve standardized units of measurement.

Ren: *I remember the chapter by Brenda, and was struck by the idea that documentation is not focused on individual children, but the group learning process, and the idea that although sometimes an individual child seems to be the focus of the documentation product, protagonist, he/she acts as a protagonist of the group learning experience. This idea really gives value to the learning dynamics and context of the learning group. Also, please describe the educational ideas/philosophies that are conveyed in the process of this kind of evaluation/assessment.*

Edwards: Reggio Emilia educators draw on a different philosophical basis for thinking about pedagogical documentation than do American educators when thinking about standardized assessment. Whereas the latter draws from a behaviorist or empiricist philosophical tradition, in which knowledge is transmitted to the (passive) learner, the Reggio Emilia concept of documentation draws on social constructivist principles, in which knowledge is actively co-created. Assessment in the strict American usage involves an evaluative, judgmental, even corrective orientation, perhaps to provide reinforcement to learners.

The practice of documentation, instead, is conducted in a way that supports learners to participate in looking at their own learning in order to construct or re-construct new

and deeper understandings. Traces of learning such as notes, transcripts, slides, photos, and videos are examined by teaching teams and with parents, but they are also shared with children so that they can examine their own work, experience, actions and comments. Teachers scaffold children's reflections on these documents with probing questions, encouragement to take the idea further, or challenges to look again at their ideas or actions and clarify them for others.

The educators in Reggio would like to use the term, assessment, not in the strict American sense, but instead in another broader sense, to actually cover their practice of observation/documentation, insofar as it is aimed at attributing not only meaning and but also *value* to experience (*Indications*, Principle 12). After all, the term "valuation" has to do with recognizing the value of something—perhaps in a way different from scoring it according to a rating system or other measurement tool. When documentation products recognize and display the intentionalities of the educational process to the public, they are providing a valuation, or judgment, of a different kind than measuring its value against a standard. This kind of judgment involves systematic and rigorous use of conscientious human teams (e.g. the pedagogical coordinating team, or the parent and citizen advisory councils) to select and prepare public documentation that reports and reveals the quality of the educational experiences, allowing the public to judge and appraise for themselves.

On Media

Ren: *The use of media is becoming more and more common in preschools. In the atelier of the preschools in Reggio Emilia, facilities like printers, scanners, monitors, and projectors are often installed. The use of media in early childhood education has attracted much attention from researchers. Can you talk about the innovative aspects of Reggio educators' use of media in early childhood education?*

Edwards: We can find current uses of digital media in the Reggio Emilia preschools that delight, surprise, and inform our understanding of early education and the competence of young children. These new uses of technology and digital media have not replaced the traditional ways that teachers encourage children to represent their ideas (e.g. drawing, painting, construction, collage) but instead add to those traditional ways, often brought in after children have explored with their whole bodies and selves (using their eyes, ears, noses, hands) and then represented their ideas in words, or graphically, or through some kinds of construction.

Thus, today in the Reggio schools we see more use of computers, scanners, and printers to create documentations to grace the walls of the schools, and more use of CDs sent home as a graduation gift to the family. These CDs capture the actual process of an experience at school in ways not possible with their older practice of giving the children a portfolio filled with notes, photographs, and drawings from the previous year. These digital photographs and moving images come from a large

archive that can be used and reused. There are now printers, scanners, digital cameras, and video equipment in many of the ateliers. The children are taught how to use this equipment to produce images on paper and images, animations and video clips on the computer screen. We have also seen an increased use of digital video both with the children to revisit an experience and for the adults to study a project or investigation.

Ren: *How do Reggio educators actually use these tools in their classrooms? What's so unique or interesting about the use of digital media in Reggio classrooms?*

Edwards: These uses of digital media when listed sound modern, but what makes them extraordinary and innovative in Reggio Emilia is how they are used to extend and update the wonderful pedagogical practices that have so interested people around the world. George Forman describes these in detail in Chapter 19 in *The Hundred Languages of Children*, 3rd edition. For example, he describes the use of digital media to integrate children's real experience with virtual experience and then with represented or symbolic experience, such as the children first running through a huge empty space, then trying to draw the concept of "running," then composing a series of digital photographs, perhaps photoshopped, creating some kind of imaginative narrative, perhaps about the feeling or the path of running.

In addition, teachers and children use digital media to slow down, break apart, or distort the perceptual components of reality (e.g. certain interesting views, motions, or sounds) in order to better control and hence understand the act of perception and discrimination. This is shown in an amazing way in the DVDs, *Shadow Stories* and *Everyday Utopias*, now available in Chinese translation.. To George Forman, the digital technology gives the child more control of the gradual process of perception and perceptual transformation and change.

Ren: *Why do all these new experimentations? Why don't Reggio educators just stick with the traditional practices (e.g., drawing, sculpture) that both the teachers and children are so familiar with?*

Edwards: Why do all this? Digital media aids the democratization and distribution of the children's learning experience to their families, communities, and teachers in Reggio and elsewhere. This is seen, for example, in *The Wonder of Learning* Exhibit, travelling worldwide. It contains videoclips that observers can stop and study. Indeed, digital videoclips are often used with study groups and in professional development sessions inside Reggio Emilia.

Another example of digital media aiding democracy is the abundance of "micropublishing" done by individual schools and infant-toddler centers. I have a little booklet published by the Diana School called *I bambini e l'ambiente digitale* (The Children and the Digital Environment). In it we see children's experimentation on the computer, transforming their digital photos of the natural world outside their

school. I also really love another booklet by the Nido d'Infanzia Sole called *dialoghi tra bambini e numeri* (Dialogues between Children and Numbers.) "Micropublishing" is a way for individual schools to share the results of their research and sell small publications to school visitors.

Hopes and Advice for Chinese educators

Ren: *Reggio educational experience has been introduced in China for almost 15 years. In the 15 years, Chinese early childhood educators have been endeavoring to study and implement Reggio educational approach. However, I have heard some Chinese educators saying that examples of successfully implementing Reggio educational approach to the educational practices in the Chinese context can rarely be found.*

Edwards: I am not so sure about the last statement that good examples can rarely be found in China. During our last few trips to China, you and I saw many wonderful examples of child-centered and reflective practice in China, inspired by Reggio Emilia and other progressive educational philosophies and approaches.

Ren: *Please talk about your advices and hopes for Chinese educators who are studying and implementing Reggio educational approach.*

Edwards: I know that the Chinese government and the public have been paying more attention to early childhood education in the last decade or so. I have been invited to give talks and workshops at several conferences in the last few years. Reflecting on the topics of my presentations in China, I want to talk about three things. First, let's take a look at professional development. Last year I attended a conference in Nanjing, and I gave a workshop on documentation and how to use documentation to facilitate reflection or teacher professional development in general. Teachers enjoyed looking at the sample documentations I used in the workshop and sharing their thoughts and reflection at the workshop. In Reggio, teacher professional development is part of teachers' everyday practice, taking various forms, from the informal exchanges among teachers during lunch breaks to formal meetings and conferences. Amongst the many goals of professional development, fostering a culture of reflection and teachers' abilities to reflect is an important one. Reflection takes time. The purpose of professional development should not be to search for a quick fix, but to slow things down and take the time to listen and interpret.

So I would encourage Chinese educators to engage teachers in professional development that involves more reflection and that starts from recognizing their own interests, strengths, and resources. What are their assets for going forward? The use of pieces of documentations as a tool for revisiting and analyzing can then be an effective approach with well-designed discussion questions and careful facilitation of the discussion process. Certainly, reflection needs to be a habitual practice, and

schools should cultivate a culture of reflection. For instance, several hours per month can be dedicated to group reflections on documentation or questions that teachers ponder on.

The discussion of professional development leads to my second thought: create culture of collaboration and use of documentation inside schools. Collaboration does not simply mean the distribution of work, but giving value to others' perspectives. Schools need to cultivate an attitude of listening and collaboration among teachers and foster the practice of collaborative inquiry. Teachers think, plan, and interpret together. Documentation can be of great use in the process of collaborative inquiry, as "it gives the teaching team a common platform for thinking together about learning, for drawing on multiple perspectives to enrich the possible interpretations" (The Hundred Languages of Children, 3rd Edition, Chapter 15, p. 282). In Chapter 15 of The Hundred Languages of Children, 3rd Edition, Brenda Fyfe lists several requirements for teaching to be a collegial and research-based activity: "(1) we make our observations visible so that we can share them with colleagues; (2) we consider each others' perspectives as we dialogue, debate, and negotiate shared interpretations; (2) together we formulate hypotheses, predictions, and projections about future learning experiences that we might propose to the children; and (4) we organize diversity, and coordinate our work in light of these agreements" (p. 282). I think Chinese educators may ponder over this, and start experimenting with collaborative inquiry with their colleagues.

Third, more efforts can be made with regard to school-family partnership and participation. I have talked about participation in detail earlier. I know how precious Chinese young children are to their parents and grandparents, so I think most parents truly want to participate in their children's educational journey. Schools are responsible to be the lenses through which parents can see their children from a new perspective. For examples, schools can create wall displays and panels that use more of children's own words and that take the viewers inside the process of the children's thinking. I think simply knowing that their children are happy at school is not enough for parents, and many parents are genuinely interested in knowing what and how their children think and learn, and their children's inner world. Malaguzzi said that to bring parents to a higher level of participation, we have to offer them a higher level of knowing. Teachers need to be the eyes for parents and grandparents to see the child as a curious, motivated, competent, and creative being who constantly searches for meaning.

Lastly, I want to stress that the Reggio approach is not a plant that you can directly transplant from Italy to China, because it is deeply rooted in the historical and cultural context. Thus, a careful examination of the local context is absolutely necessary and worthwhile. As Howard Gardner says, "if people want to change their context, the observation has to start from what their context offers and the sense of belonging that is there" (The Hundred Languages of Children, 3rd Edition, Chapter 10, p. 183).

·理论前沿·

瑞吉欧·艾米利亚幼儿教育体系的历史审视和现实发展 ——美国内布拉斯加大学教育和人类科学学院及心理学系 卡洛琳·波普·爱德华兹教授访谈录

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【摘要】本文通过对长期关注意大利瑞吉欧·艾米利亚幼儿教育体系的资深研究者、《儿童的一百种语言》第一作者、美国内布拉斯加大学林肯分校的卡洛琳·波普·爱德华兹教授的深度专访,从历史审视和现实发展两个角度全面梳理了瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系经过长期探索逐步形成的有关核心教育价值观、课程与教学理论和实践、教师的角色及其专业发展、艺术工作室和艺术教师、档案记录及其教育评价理念乃至数字媒体技术的运用等一系列已产生深远历史影响并充分体现时代创新意义的丰硕成果。应专访者的提请,爱德华兹教授还对中国幼教工作者学习和借鉴瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系提出了中肯的建议和积极的期望。

【关键词】瑞吉欧;幼儿教育体系;历史审视;现实发展;建议和期望

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现今受到全世界幼教工作者普遍关注乃至推崇的意大利瑞吉欧·艾米利亚幼儿教育体系是从距离瑞吉欧·艾米利亚市不远的一个叫维拉塞拉(Villa Cella)的小村庄里发源的。二战结束后,那里的居民决定为他们的子女创办一所学校。马拉古兹听闻后赶到了那里,就此拉开了他为幼儿教育奋斗一生的序幕。

上个世纪80年代,瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系已声名远播,吸引着世界各地的幼教工作者前往参观、交流并开展合作研究。卡洛琳·波普·爱德华兹教授是研究跨文化教育问题的学者,她的足迹遍及世界各地。可以说,是她与莱拉·甘第尼、乔治·福尔曼等人对瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系深入而系统的研究,大力推动了瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系在世界各地的传播。由于世界各地教育者的推崇,瑞吉欧·艾

米利亚成为一个举世闻名的幼教圣地:1984年,“儿童的一百种语言与学习奇迹”展览风靡欧美各国;1991年,瑞吉欧·艾米利亚市的戴安娜幼儿园被美国《新闻周刊》评为“世界上最好的学校”。

新世纪伊始,“瑞吉欧”三个字悄然降临中国。中国幼教界以高度的热情参与到了学习和研讨瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系的热潮之中。一系列新概念,如儿童作为学习者的本质,成人对儿童“声音”的尊重,教师、家长和儿童之间的相互依存,社区建立的文化环境,以探索和发现为导向的课程等成为中国幼教工作者耳熟能详的新理论、新方法。

时光如梭,《儿童的一百种语言》第3版的中文版已于2015年出版(英文版则出版于2012年)。中国幼教工作者在继续深入思考“向瑞吉欧学习什么”“如何践行瑞吉欧的儿童教育理念”等

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问题,并且在追问:在过去的十几年里,瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系有哪些发展与变化?这些发展与变化又告诉了我们什么,或者说又给了我们什么新的启示?为此,本刊特别对卡洛琳·波普·爱德华兹教授作了一次专访。

一、教育价值观

专访者:非常感谢您接受我们的专访。当前,世界各国幼教工作者都逐渐意识到,任何一种教育思想都不会是一成不变的,瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系也是如此。不过,在种种变化之中,核心的教育价值观通常是一以贯之的。请您谈谈瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系的核心教育价值观以及它对瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系的深刻影响,好吗?

爱德华兹:瑞吉欧推出了一本叫《瑞吉欧·艾米利亚市属幼儿园和婴幼儿园指南》(Indications: Preschools and Infant-toddler Centers of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia)的书。在这本书中,瑞吉欧的幼教工作者对瑞吉欧教育理念的核心价值观提供了一份较新、较清晰的陈述。自上个世纪50年代至今,这些核心的教育价值观就一直在明确地、深刻地指导着瑞吉欧的幼儿教育。在跟瑞吉欧幼教工作者的讨论交流中,我们也一遍又一遍地听到他们提及这些核心价值观。下面就是瑞吉欧幼儿教育理念核心价值观的一个清单。^①

- 儿童是他们自身成长和发展过程中的主角
- 一百种语言
- 参与
- 倾听
- 学习是个体和群体构建的过程
- 教育研究
- 档案记录
- 方案教学
- 组织
- 环境、空间和关系
- 专业发展
- 评估

在这里我不一一讨论每个核心价值观的内容,但我想着重谈一谈其中一个我认为极其有趣并且也是极其重要的核心价值观:参与(participation)。尽管意大利语中存在着与“卷入”这个英

文单词同词根的单词,但在意大利的学校里,人们一般用“参与”这个词来指代学校与家庭之间的关系,而不是美国人所用的“卷入”(involvement)一词。直至今日,在所有关于意大利早期儿童教育方面的著作中,“参与”这一概念仍反复出现,它涵盖了多个美国人常用概念所包含的一系列含义:卷入(involvement)、参加(engagement)和合作关系(partnership)。

专访者:也就是说,“参与”一词所包含的意思比“卷入”要广。那么,它的含义广在哪里呢?

爱德华兹:“参与”的含义更广,是因为它不仅意味着家长和教师要参与,社区的其他成员也要参与。同时,它还包括了各种形式、各个层面的参与和贡献,且并不对其参与和贡献的程度加以区分。此外,在阐述与文化多元相关的问题时,“参与”这一概念是从多元视角和鼓励人们进行对话的角度出发的。当谈到家长和市民的“参与”以及民主的价值问题时,瑞吉欧的幼教工作者会频繁地提及参与这一概念。参与既包括社区居民在建立和运行早期儿童教育系统时的管理和合作,也包括将学校、家庭和社区联系起来的日常教学实践,比如衔接工作(指教师在儿童入园适应和幼小衔接方面所开展的教学实践)、与家长合作以及更广泛的社会组织和团体合作。

专访者:这种参与及其实践是如何影响家长看待自己以及孩子的呢?

爱德华兹:任何回答都不如家长自己的话有分量。瑞吉欧·艾米利亚《城市和童年委员会纲领》(Charter of the City and Childhood Councils)中节选的部分瑞吉欧家长的话^②,体现了家长在参与家长委员会以及通过其他方式为学校生活作贡献的过程中所获得的情感价值。

专访者:节选的话中,最后一位家长所传递的意思大概是:参与是公民的一项基本权利和责任。他暗示了参与的意义远远超出了他自己的家庭和孩子的范畴。

爱德华兹:有趣的是,意大利宪法第3条就强调了公民参与这一概念,“公众的责任是排除限制公民自由和平等权利,排除阻碍人的充分发展和有效参与国家的政治、经济和社会组织的那些经

^①注:请参阅本刊上期《瑞吉欧·艾米利亚的教师研究:一个充满活力并不断演变角色的精髓》“作为家庭合作伙伴的教师”部分。

济和社会制度障碍”。^②因此,在意大利,当提到在法律面前人的基础权利和尊严时,参与这个词会引起深刻的共鸣,这可能与美国人所说的“生命、自由和追求幸福的权利”所传达的意思相似。参与不单是到达终点的手段,它本身就是一个终极目标或优良品质。意大利虽然不像中国或者韩国等国家那么强调集体主义,但也不像美国那么强调个体主义,那里的人们强烈重视社区和社会归属感。

专访者:如今社会发展迅速,即便是中国,一个被广泛认可的集体主义社会,也变得越来越个体主义。在您看来,瑞吉欧市民的参与也因为这种全球化的社会变化而有所减弱吗?

爱德华兹:二战以后,意大利社会经历了很多变化,其中的许多变化跟其他西方国家社会所经历的变化或变革如出一辙,比如出生率下降、人的寿命延长、外来移民增多等,从而导致人口结构更加多元化。因此,那些最初促使瑞吉欧家长参与教育的外界条件发生了变化。但是,面临这些社会和经济变化,家长参与早期教育的理念或者理想并没有坍塌,相反,这些理念展现出了适应新的文化和社会环境的能力。最初,建立家长委员会是为了在学校运行方面为外部人士(如女性和工薪阶层)提供发言权。目前,该委员会也很好地为其他类型的外部人士(译者注:比如移民家庭)提供了参与和发言的途径。

实际上,据我们的经验,意大利人似乎很享受聚会的过程。在聚会过程中,每个人都很有礼貌地倾听他人并且在讨论中贡献一些自己的想法。我参加了一些此类的聚会,聚会上人们认识彼此,并享受彼此的陪伴,他们通常分享美味可口的小吃和个人故事。这些聚会具有很高的质量,且通常持续到很晚。幼儿园的儿童也学习这种倾心交流的艺术,他们“精通”讨论(discussione)^①的艺术,愉悦地和同伴赛智赛勇。

如今在瑞吉欧,新的移民家庭和新一代的年轻父母希望他们的愿望能够通过不同于以往的方式得到倾听。尽管这带来了挑战,但瑞吉欧的幼教工作者、家长和市民依然能够创造出一些平台来用心倾听彼此并回应对方的需求。

二、课程与教学

专访者:提起瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系的课程与教学,人们通常会想到“方案活动”“协商性学习”“教学档案”“倾听教学法”等概念。请从瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系的课程与教学发展角度,谈谈这些概念之间的关系,并请介绍一下瑞吉欧幼教工作者有关课程与教学发展的新观点、新方法,好吗?

爱德华兹:这些概念的含义有所重叠,所以有时候会让人产生一些困惑。每个概念所体现的基本教育理念有所不同,瑞吉欧的幼教工作者往往用“progettazione”这个词来表达这里所包含的基本教育理念。然而,没有一个英文单词可以很好地对译“progettazione”这个词。因此,不同的学者用各种各样的术语来加以阐述。我们可以说它的意思是“灵活的规划”或者“不预设终点的计划”。正如卡利娜·里那第(Carlina Rinaldi, 1998)在谈到课程时所说的:“课程既是明确的,又是不明确的,既是有结构、有组织的,又是开放的,课程更多的是基于灵活的策划,而不是死板的计划。”事实上,这一理念也同样适用于其他类型的策划,如空间和环境设计、年末庆典活动设计等。灵活规划适用于课程以及学校生活的每一个方面,并且在决策过程中,它始终需要多个声音的参与。

专访者:所以说所有的这些概念都被包含在“progettazione”这个大概概念下面。有趣的是,也没有一个单一的中文语词可以全面表达出“progettazione”这个词所包含的意思。

爱德华兹:涉及到课程,“progettazione”包含两个方面的内容。它的最强版本似乎是方案教学,通常是长期的项目,整个班级、整个学校甚至是许多学校一起参与完成。它的另一方面含义是日常的倾听教学法,卡利娜·里那第在《儿童的一百种语言》第3版的第13章中非常形象感性地讨论了倾听教学法。通过这一章节我们可以了解到,瑞吉欧的教师帮助儿童在他们的所作所为、经历和体验中寻找意义,在那些并不一定是长期的方案教学活动中的“平凡时刻”中寻找意义。许多来自瑞吉欧的著名的小册子或者故事的确涉及到长期的方案教学活动,比如“影子的故事”(Shadow stories)、“雨中的城市”(The city in the rain)、

^①注:discussione,“讨论”或者“辩论”,其中包含使用幽默的、含有典故的和具有各种不同风格的语言,并且这种辩论或者讨论不会升级到引发严重的冲突。

“狮子的画像”(The portrait of a lion)等。但是,在瑞吉欧的出版物中,我们同样可以找到许多有关平凡时刻、微型故事的出版物,比如那些在《劳拉日记》中得到完美呈现的时刻和故事。该书由我和卡利娜·里那第编辑(译者注:中文版本即将由南京师范大学出版社出版)。事实上,长期的方案教学活动是由无数的“平凡时刻”编织而成的。与此对应,极具影响的平凡时刻也可能萌发出长期的方案教学活动。

这两个方面都与美国的生成课程(emergent curriculum)理念相吻合,许多主张以儿童为中心的美国教育工作者都采用过生成课程这个概念,比如黛比·卡特(Debbie Carter)和约翰·尼莫(John Nimmo)。可是乔治·福尔曼(George Forman)更偏爱使用“协商性课程”(negotiated curriculum)这一概念。他和布伦达·菲弗(Brenda Fyfe)在《儿童的一百种语言》第3版第14章中对这个概念进行了解释。但在我看来,“生成课程”这个概念体现的理念是,课程并不是事先被死板地规划好的,而是在倾听的过程中“浮现”或者“萌发”出来的。当然,“协商性课程”这一概念强调的是课程的社会化建构,即体现的是教育过程共同建构的本质,也就是倾听多个声音。正如福尔曼和菲弗所说的那样:“在协商性学习中,教师试图解析儿童关于客观事物和社会环境的信念、假设或理论……他们的解析揭示了儿童兴趣背后的原因……在这种合作建构课程中,教师与儿童、家长以及其他教师一起形成了一个学习者的社区。”⁽³⁾因此,教师必须共同合作,一起来解读儿童的语言和行为。

专访者:反思这些不同的概念所隐含的微妙的意思很有意义。那么档案记录呢?当我们提到档案记录时,许多人想到的是最终产物,因为最终产物看得见摸得着,但是档案记录的含义应该远不止这些。

爱德华兹:那些开展灵活规划或者协商性课程的幼教工作者必须要做许多需要深思熟虑的工作。当我们谈及这些工作时,就会涉及到档案记录的概念。档案记录这个概念所指的,既包括过程,也包括最终产物。“过程”是一个周期,该周期包括两个或多个教师提出的一个教育问题,然后共同进行观察和记录(即收集班级中发生的相关事件),接着对这些观察和记录进行分析与反思,

解读和评估它们的意义,再策划下一步的教育行动计划并提出新的问题。通过档案记录的成品(比如展板、小册子、DVD、卡片和其他有关形式),这个观察和记录的过程使得儿童、教师以及家长和参观者等其他成人能够“看得见儿童的学习过程”。那些美妙的档案记录体现了教师的创造力以及他们对儿童的尊重。

三、教师的角色及其专业发展

专访者:在瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系中,教师专业发展有着悠远的历史,并且它还在不断演变。您能带领我们从最初的时候开始,讨论一下瑞吉欧的幼教工作者是如何开展教师专业发展工作的吗?

爱德华兹:瑞吉欧公立幼儿教育系统的创始人罗里斯·马拉古兹(Loris Malaguzzi)认为,教师就像孩子和其他每个人一样,有发展个人能力的需求,因为他们想要能够解读班级中所发生的一切,他们认为有必要做出各种预测、进行各种尝试。“解读”这一行为是至关重要的,教师需要对正在发生的教育过程进行解读,而不是只等待评估结果。

专访者:教师是如何学会这么去做的呢?这么多年来,教师的专业发展有所变化吗?

爱德华兹:在最初的时候,也就是二战结束不久,教育工作者试图摆脱旧的教育传统的束缚,即以教师为中心,只通过简单的日常流程和事先规划好的重复性游戏等教学方法教育幼儿,而不是通过创造性的方式鼓励幼儿去探索材料和环境以及运用工具和材料去表征探索过程的教育传统。到上个世纪80年代末,世界范围内很多研究者开始意识到瑞吉欧正在发展非常有趣的教育实验,它不是一种“方法”,而是一种“理念”,一种思考、观察、讨论、预测和试验的方式。

这种理念是扎根于本土的环境和背景中的。它不是基于一种固定的课程或者事先设定好的路径,而是持有一种既严谨又开放的态度,审视和检验环境、材料和人的互动。它是一个持续的研究、构建和重新构建知识的过程,并通过观察和档案记录让儿童的学习看得见。自从1963年瑞吉欧创建第一所幼儿公立学校起,马拉古兹就深刻意识到获取家长和瑞吉欧市民的信任和尊重的必要性。

专访者:马拉古兹是如何开始落实这个非常

具有远见的抱负的呢?

爱德华兹:在二战末期,一些家长带头创建了合作学校。在最初的那些年,马拉古兹使用的策略是让教师基于在合作学校工作所获得的经验而继续作出努力。当时的马拉古兹努力学习意大利之外的教育经验,特别是瑞士日内瓦的教育经验,当时皮亚杰正活跃着。马拉古兹为教师、家长和市民提供了新型的学习体验,举办了相关的学术会议,比如邀请意大利人贾尼·罗大里(Gianni Rodari)开展有关儿童幻想和想像力的讲座,邀请大卫·霍金斯(David Hawkins)、丽莲·凯兹(Lilian Katz)和来自美国的其他学者参加以“儿童潜能和权利”为主题的学术会议。

在瑞吉欧,专业发展被认为是教师之间共同建构的,是教师与家长和市民分享教育体验的过程。这种专业发展的理念使其包含了许多文化活动,比如充分利用学术讲座、音乐会或者艺术展览的机会,为成人和孩子提供富有启迪性的经历。所有这些在瑞吉欧公立幼儿园早期历史发展阶段就开启的工作今天依然在持续地进行着,并获得了更广泛的参与,最终也得到了世界各地教育工作者的肯定,经验得以传播。

专访者:如今在培养教师深厚的职业素养方面,瑞吉欧的教育工作者面临着怎样的挑战,他们是怎么应对这些挑战的呢?

爱德华兹:最近几年,瑞吉欧有这么多新教师加入到幼教团队中来,这引发了针对新教师入职适应的一些创新。在某些情况下,四个或者五个新教师同时被安排在一个婴幼儿中心或者一所幼儿园,但要确保在这所学校中至少有同等数量或者更多有经验的教师可向这些新教师传递该校的教育理念及相关信息。在新学年初或其他时候,学校会为新教师提供高强度的专业发展培训。瑞吉欧还为新教师的专业发展开展过督导教师的尝试。这些督导教师在多个婴幼儿中心或者多所幼儿园为新教师提供专业发展支持。督导教师从他们任职的学校来到一个新的学校工作,人们并不希望这些督导教师表现得像大学教授一样向新教师传递“正确的”信息,相反,他们的角色被期待为激发和丰富新教师的想法,促进新教师间的交流和对话。督导教师是一个微妙而又极具难度的角色,它需要把握一种平衡:在向新教师介绍某些教

育理念并回应新教师原有教育理念之间取得平衡。这些督导教师带来了自己在原任职学校积累的工作经验,但同时又对开拓新的视野保持开放的态度,他们充分意识到自己先前的经验并不是金科玉律,今天的自己以及新教师完全可以采用不同的方式来做同样的事情。

总体而言,由于瑞吉欧幼儿教育服务系统正日趋复杂,瑞吉欧教育工作者的专业发展过程也在不断地发生着变化。目前,瑞吉欧有三个“横向联络”教学协同研究人员,他们负责整个教学研究系统的协调工作,应对整个系统的复杂性。这些“横向联络”教学协同研究人员负责协调瑞吉欧·艾米利亚市的教学研究工作,并承担促进教师专业发展的工作。此外,他们还负责与该市和整个艾米利亚·罗马涅地区其他教育机构的合作工作。这些教学协同人员紧密合作,开展了一项促进教师专业发展的系统变革,他们称之为“拓展性教学体系”。这个拓展性教学体系并不是一种自上而下的线性传播,而是一种为同事创造更多知识创造与经验交流机会的变革,教师的专业能力在这种新的专业发展体制下得以进一步提高。理想状态下,这一体制能促进老一辈和新生代教师之间的相互学习,并促使他们围绕长期以来人们共同关心的某些教学方法问题展开讨论。

这一新的专业发展体制不仅深化了过去数年来该市教师专业发展的某些趋势,也体现了该市幼教体制对新的环境和挑战的适应性。它还有一个作用就是有效传承了通过几十年探索所积累下来的经验,这些经验本来有可能会由于教职员工的世代更替而濒临危险。也可以说,这一新的专业发展体制赋予了那些有着深厚专业功底的教育工作者以新的责任。

专访者:您好像在详细描述教师工作过程和专业发展方面的变化,那么今天他们的工作内容有什么变化吗?为了有效应对当今社会生活方式的种种变化,教师会关注哪些新的教育教学主题呢?

爱德华兹:在教育教学过程中,瑞吉欧教师的角色主要体现在“灵活规划”和“倾听教学法”上。正如我先前解释的,倾听教学法指的是帮助儿童从他们的所作所为、经历和体验中寻找意义。在今天的瑞吉欧幼儿园中,我们可以看到教师对儿童身心幸福方面话题的广泛探究,也可以看到教

师对生态保护方面主题的关注,如儿童与自然和户外的关系,以及有关植物和食物对于滋养人类情感和身体作用方面的探究。我们看到一些方案教学活动的小册子或档案记录中,儿童在探究植物、大海、空气以及在思考地球的未来。在设计新的园舍时,我们看到学校与年轻建筑师之间的合作,他们共同将一些明显的户外元素引入室内,或者将室内元素带到户外去。另外,我们还看到有关审美和多媒体技术运用方面的创新,尤其是有关儿童与多媒体技术的话题。我们也看到教师越来越重视有关接纳那些由于残疾或者有特殊学习需要而有特殊权利儿童的话题。目前,教育工作者正积极地加强与社区医护人员的联系,以促进接纳性参与的数量和质量。他们也努力学习与他们所采用的基于关系的教学法相吻合的新疗法。虽然我们依然能够看到有关长期方案教学活动的档案记录,但是目前许多教师的专业发展越来越侧重于如何在日常的每个寻常时刻为儿童提供高质量的教育,不但在婴幼儿中心和幼儿园是如此,而且在全市性的活动以及其他各类与各个年龄段儿童相关的学习场合也是如此。

四、艺术工作室和艺术教师

专访者:从上个世纪60年代开始,瑞吉欧·艾米利亚的每所幼儿园都创设了艺术工作室,并配备了一名具有艺术专业背景的教师。与当初设立时相比,艺术工作室的功能和价值有什么变化吗?

爱德华兹:上个世纪60年代,罗里斯·马拉古兹的确在瑞吉欧的每所幼儿园都推广创设了艺术工作室,并配备一名有艺术专业背景的教师。这位驻园艺术教师与学校其他教学人员一起组织儿童和教师的教育生活,并承担学校档案记录的编辑和设计工作。正如维·维奇(Vea Vecchi)在《儿童的一百种语言》中描述的那样,这是一个富有创意而勇敢的选择,这个选择为瑞吉欧教育中的想像力、创造力、表达和审美赋予了重要意义。^[4]

按维·维奇的说法,艺术工作室一开始就承担了两个功能。第一,它为儿童提供一个学习和掌握与多种表征方式相关的技术的实习场所,比如运用绘画、拼贴画和粘土雕塑等手法进行表征。第二,它为教师提供一个研究和解读儿童学习过程的探究场所。这种创新方式撼动了旧的教学理念,并为教师的工作带来了新意。

专访者:马拉古兹当时的主要用意是什么呢?

爱德华兹:艺术工作室里的教学也是整个教育的有机组成部分,它的目的是支持并提高整个教育项目的开展和质量提升。通常,视觉和艺术表达教育在传统学校教育中处于边缘地位,但是艺术工作室和驻校艺术教师为人们展示了一种焕然一新的教育:儿童有机会接受一种超越原来基于文字和常规教育的教育。人们希望教师能够从儿童的第一次涂鸦开始,不断观察儿童并发掘与儿童发展相关的理论。正如马拉古兹所说的:“在我们的教育理念中,艺术工作室是学校里的一个附加空间。在这里,我们用双手、用心灵去探索;在这里,我们通过视觉艺术来提升我们的感知;在这里,我们进行与活动室中开展的活动相关联的项目;在这里,我们探索为人们所熟知的各种工具、材料和技术,并对其进行重新组合。”

专访者:从这个意义上讲,艺术工作室的目的其实并不是让儿童学习艺术,而是激发儿童运用他们的一百种语言来学习。艺术工作室这些年来有新的发展或演变吗?

爱德华兹:维·维奇是第一个与马拉古兹并肩工作的驻校艺术教师,她引介了许多艺术教师进入到这个岗位,其中的两位是玛拉·达沃利(Mara Davoli)和乔凡尼·皮亚泽(Giovanni Piazza),她们在《艺术工作室的灵魂》(In the Spirit of the Studio)一书中写到了艺术工作室新的发展和演变。玛拉描述了早期所有富有激情的尝试。例如,教师之间会进行这样的分享:“我做了这个,我是这样来诠释发生的事情的,你怎么想?”又如,在马拉古兹的鼓舞下,她们从绘画和粘土雕塑等的表征手法拓展到了以其他媒介或技术为手段的表征手法,如今这样的媒介或技术甚至也包括了摄影和电脑。在驻校艺术教师的指引下,儿童使用摄像头探究外部世界,运用电脑进行照片编辑和视频制作。

玛拉曾经谈到,早年有教师准备了系列图表,这些图表描述了各种材料的功能以及它们的质地,并且就如何去商店挑选这些材料提供了建议。另有教师研究了自己和儿童是如何利用学校里的艺术工作室和其他空间的,他们用绘图的方式来记录儿童在学校哪些地方作了较多的停留,以及哪些空间没有得到充分利用,而哪些又被过

度使用了。基于这个研究,幼儿园所有活动室都添加了迷你艺术工作室。维·维奇还说到,当初戴安娜幼儿园翻新时,方案设计的是在活动室中修建一个可以容纳班上所有孩子的大空间,同时也修建一个小空间(迷你艺术工作室)。乔凡尼·皮亚泽开展了许多材料方面的尝试,研究这些材料可以如何在儿童的发展中化身为“关系”和“语言”,促使儿童与材料之间进行“对话”。

其他的教育工作者也开展了一些相关文化项目的创新工作,将教育工作拓展到了学校和展览之外。比如,借助探索意大利表现主义绘画艺术家阿尔贝托·布里(Alberto Burri)的艺术作品,艺术教师和其他教师帮助整个社区对未来进行了展望,以动员大家一起来创新文化。这一切都说明,艺术工作室是一个随时间、理念和实践的演变而不断演变的概念。如果今天你去参观罗里斯·马拉古兹国际中心,你会看到两个新的、震撼人心的尝试。一个是光线艺术工作室,该工作室以各种形式来展现光,人们可以通过探索来对光进行研究,这种探索可充分激发人们奇妙的感觉和好奇心,并促进创造力的发展或引发更深层次的探究。这也是一个研究新型教学方法的场所。驻校艺术教师计划将光线艺术工作室向各种不同类型的学校开放,开展有指导性的参观活动以及有较强操作性的工作坊活动,并在星期日对家庭开放。另一个是味觉艺术工作室,这是一个独特的餐厅,这里的食物都基于“原料的绝妙、对原料特征的至高尊重、传统和创新、本土的时鲜食物以及营养的多元化”原则制作而成。如今,儿童和家庭常常共同探讨与食物相关的话题,包括作物的种植、食物的准备、食物的口味和营养价值等。这一工作室借鉴了瑞吉欧婴幼儿中心和幼儿园中厨房的创设经验,也被列为一个方案教学项目。

在这里,我还要提及瑞吉欧的市立废物利用中心,这是一个创新的回收中心,由瑞吉欧儿童中心(Reggio Children)管辖。该废物利用中心向全市各年龄段的市民倡导这样一个观念:通常被认为是“无用废物”的材料可以成为无价的资源。废物利用中心从生意人那里收集材料(如纸张、硬纸板、陶瓷、颜料、线、皮毛、木头、橡胶、金属和塑料等),然后对材料加以整理,并向婴幼儿中心、幼儿园、小学、初中和高中的教师发放。此外,它还面

向教育和文化组织、老年活动中心、为残疾人设立的工作坊、娱乐中心发放。该中心的目标是通过开发废旧材料新的用途和意义来赋予这些废弃材料或有瑕疵产品以价值,从而培养人们保护生态环境的公德心和对地球的尊重。除此之外,它的目标还包括为交流、创造和创新提供各种机会。

五、档案记录及其教育评价理念

专访者:在瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系中,教育评价与档案记录密不可分。请从教育评价的角度谈谈档案记录的重要性。

爱德华兹:在美国,评估被认为是一种用于测量个体某一特性或技能特点和水平的手段。正式的评估方法可能包括阅读测验、发展筛查测验和诊断测验,非正式的评估方法可能包括直接观察、访谈、传闻轶事记录、清单检查和儿童作品样本收集。

与之不同的是,瑞吉欧幼儿教育机构中运用的档案记录方法是一种使儿童的学习过程看得见的手段,它可以被看作是重访、重新构建、解读和重新解读,是决策的基础。⁽⁵⁾档案记录通常是面向集体的,即聚焦儿童与同伴或成人的互动。虽然档案记录也可能揭示某个儿童认识或能力发展的情况,但它的真正意义在于展示并研究儿童的学习轨迹以及他们在寻求意义时所经历的过程。档案记录是一个帮助教师和儿童分析和反思先前经历的工具。在分析和反思中,他们倾听彼此的观点、理论或见解,然后共同确定下一步的学习路径。因此,档案记录不是一个测量工具。正如布伦达·菲弗所说,测量的目的是获得精确的量化结果,但档案记录重在展示并研究“学习的痕迹”,并不涉及标准化的测量。⁽⁶⁾

专访者:也就是说,档案记录并不关注个体儿童而是学习共同体的学习过程,虽然有时候档案记录成品看起来似乎关注的是某个儿童,但该儿童其实是学习共同体学习经历中的主角。按布伦达·菲弗的说法,档案记录其实强调的是对学习动态和学习背景价值的关注。那么,档案记录这一教育评价过程体现了怎样的教育理念呢?

爱德华兹:瑞吉欧教育工作者在开展档案记录时所持有的理念与美国教育工作者在开展标准化测验时所持有的理念是不同的。后者秉持的是行为主义或者实证主义的哲学传统,认为知识是

被传递给学习者的;前者借鉴的是社会建构主义理论,认为知识是学习者主动共同建构的。当评估用的是严格的美式方法时,它包含测评、评判,甚至纠偏,这或许是为了向学习者提供强化。与之不同的是,档案记录帮助学习者参与并审视自己的学习,以建构或者共同建构新的和更深刻的理解。教师会与儿童分享研究笔记、文字记录、幻灯片、照片和录像等“学习的痕迹”,以便儿童能够检验和审视自己的作品、经历、语言和行为。教师还会通过提问、鼓励儿童重新审视自己的想法或行为或者向他人进一步说明这些想法或行为等方式,帮助儿童对自己的学习过程进行反思。

瑞吉欧的教育工作者在运用评估这一概念时,倾向于宽泛意义上的使用,而不是严格意义上的美国的用法。这个宽泛意义上的定义实际上包含了教育工作者的观察和记录,它的目的不仅是赋予经历以意义,同时也赋予其价值。⁽⁷⁾归根结底,“valuation”这个词与意识到的事物的价值有关,这种评价理念和方式与依据一个评分系统或者一个测量工具进行的测评不同。当档案记录的意义和价值在于记录学习过程,并向公众展示儿童的学习轨迹时,它就提供了一种不同于标准化测量的评价方式,它允许公众自己去做出评判或评价。

六、数字媒体技术的运用

专访者:当下多媒体技术的使用在幼儿园越来越普遍,瑞吉欧·艾米利亚幼儿园的艺术工作室里也大多配备了打印机、扫描仪、显示器和投影仪等设备。多媒体技术在幼儿教育中的运用已受到研究者的普遍关注。请具体介绍一下,瑞吉欧幼教工作者将多媒体技术运用于早期儿童教育实践中的创新之处,好吗?

爱德华兹:在瑞吉欧的幼儿园中,我们可以看到数字媒体技术的运用,其运用令我们感到欣喜和惊讶,并加深了我们对幼儿教育以及幼儿能力的理解。数字媒体技术的运用并没有取代教师鼓励儿童用传统的方式(例如绘画、搭建、拼贴画等方式)表征自己的想法,而是在传统方式的基础上进行了添加。儿童通常会先运用自己的整个身体去参与和探索(例如,运用自己的眼睛、耳朵、鼻子和手等),然后用文字、图像或者搭建的方式来表征自己的想法,随后数字媒体技术才会被引入到学习中来。另外,我们看到教师越来越多地运

用电脑、扫描仪和打印机来制作档案、装饰墙面以及制作作为毕业礼物送给家庭的CD。这些CD反映了儿童在园的真实经历,这是传统的档案记录所不能比拟的。CD中的数字照片和视频都源于一个大的数据库,它们可以被重复使用。现在,人们对录像的运用越来越频繁,儿童逐渐学会了使用新媒体设备在纸上制作图案以及在电脑屏幕上制作图像、动画和视频短片。

专访者:瑞吉欧教育工作者是如何运用这些工具的?在瑞吉欧的教学活动中,多媒体的运用有何独到或有趣之处?

爱德华兹:当我们谈到数字媒体技术时,它们听起来似乎很高端,那么瑞吉欧的教育工作者是如何运用数字媒体技术来拓展自己的教学实践的呢?瑞吉欧的教师重在运用数字媒体技术来整合儿童的真实和虚拟的体验,然后再将其与各种表征方法或者符号体验相整合。乔治·福尔曼在《儿童的一百种语言》中描述了这样一个活动:为了帮助儿童理解“奔跑”的概念,教师让儿童先在一个空旷的地方跑来跑去,然后请他们试着用画画的方式来表达“奔跑”这一概念。接着,教师鼓励儿童运用一组数字照片来表现一个关于奔跑的故事。

此外,教师运用数字媒体技术来显示对某些感知元素(如某个有趣的场景、动作或者声音)的减速或分解,以帮助儿童更好地理解和体验这些感知元素。在《影子故事》(Shadow Stories)和《每一天的“乌托邦”》(Everyday Utopia)的DVD中(译者注:中文版已出版),这一点被表现得淋漓尽致。

专访者:瑞吉欧的教育工作者为什么要进行这些新的尝试呢?为什么不坚持运用传统的、教师和儿童都很熟悉的表征方法(如画画、雕塑等方法)呢?

爱德华兹:数字媒体技术有助于将儿童的学习经历民主化并传播给家庭、社区以及瑞吉欧和其他地方的教师。这一点已在“学习的奥妙”(The Wonder of Learning)环球展览中得到体现。这个展览包含有一些视频短片,参观者可以在它的前面驻留和学习。实际上,瑞吉欧的教育工作者也经常将视频短片用于教师的专业发展工作,并运用于前来瑞吉欧学习观摩的教育工作者

的学习中。

另一个数字媒体促进民主化的例子是瑞吉欧的“微出版物”。戴安娜学校出版了一本名叫《儿童与数字环境》的小册子,其中,我们可以看到儿童在电脑上进行的各种尝试。例如,孩子们在电脑上对所拍摄的照片进行编辑和转换。另外有一本名叫《儿童与数字的对话》的小册子,它由太阳婴幼儿中心出版。“微出版物”为学校提供了一种分享他们研究成果的途径,并且学校也可以将出版物出售给前来学校参观的学习者。

七、对中国幼教工作者的建议和期望

专访者:瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系及其教育经验传入中国已近15年。在这15年中,中国幼教工作者也在努力学习、实践瑞吉欧的幼儿教育思想,但是我们的感觉,真正能将瑞吉欧幼儿教育思想成功应用于教育实践的仍然不多。

爱德华兹:我对这个说法不是很赞同。我们近几年来过几次中国,我们看到了许多以儿童为中心和反思自己的教学实践的优秀案例,我认为,它们或多或少都受到了瑞吉欧教育理念以及其他进步教育理念和方法的影响。

专访者:您对正在学习和实践瑞吉欧幼儿教育体系及其教育经验的中国幼教工作者有何建议和期望?

爱德华兹:据我所知,中国政府和公众近十年来越来越关注幼儿教育。我近几年受邀到中国参加了几个会议,并开展了讲座和工作坊活动。通过反思我在中国开展的讲座和工作坊活动,我想谈三点看法。

首先,关于教师专业发展。去年我在南京参加了一个会议并组织了一个工作坊活动,主题为“档案记录以及如何运用档案记录促进反思”(这实际上是广义的教师专业发展)。在工作坊活动中,我运用了一些档案记录案例,在场的教师都很喜欢这些案例,他们也很愿意现场分享他们的想法和反思。在瑞吉欧,教师专业发展是教师日常教学工作的一个组成部分,形式多种多样,如在午休期间作非正式的交流以及组织正式的面谈或会议。瑞吉欧教师的专业发展有种种目标,其中最为重要的目标之一是培养一种反思文化以及教师的反思能力。我们认为,反思需要时间,专业发展找不到“快速疗法”,应慢下脚步,花时间进行倾听

和解读。因此,我想鼓励中国的幼教工作者从了解自己的兴趣、强项和资源开始,重视并促进自己的专业发展。在这个过程中,可运用一些优秀的档案记录片段进行回顾和分析,在回顾和分析时会涉及更多的专业反思。我认为,反思应成为教师教学实践工作中的一个习惯,幼儿园也应营造教学反思文化,如每个月拿出几个小时的工作时间,组织教师一起对档案记录或他们感到困惑的问题进行反思和讨论。

其次,关于创造合作的文化。合作并不只是简单的配合,而是赋予他人的观点以价值。学校应该培养教师相互间倾听和合作的态度,鼓励教师一起思考、计划和解读,开展合作性探究的教学实践。档案记录在合作性探究的过程中有极其重要的作用,它可为教学团队提供一个共同的平台,以便大家一起思考学习过程,产生多角度的见解,从而使解释更为丰富多样。⁽⁸⁾教学是需要以同事间的合作和研究为基础的活动,布伦达·菲弗列举了几个先决条件:(1)再现我们观察到的东西,以便与同事分享。(2)通过对话、辩论和协商共享解释,相互考虑彼此的见解。(3)一起作出对未来学习经验的假设与预测,以便为儿童提出建议。(4)组织多样化,并根据合约协调彼此的工作。我认为中国的幼教工作者可以借鉴这几条,然后开始与同事尝试进行合作性探究。

第三,学校可以在家庭合作和家庭参与方面付出更多的努力。在前面我已经谈论了较多关于参与的问题了。我认为,多数家长都是十分愿意参与他们孩子的教育之旅的。学校有责任成为家长的眼睛,让他们以新的视角认识自己的孩子。比如,学校可以制作展板,把儿童的话语和思考展现出来,将家长真正带到儿童的世界和思考中去。我认为,对于家长来说,仅仅知道自己的孩子在学校里面过得开不开心是不够的。事实上,许多家长是真心想了解他们的孩子在思考和学习什么、是如何思考 and 学习的,以及他们孩子的内心世界。马拉古兹曾经说过,要想让家长的参与提升到一个新的层次,我们需要为他们提供更高层次的认知。教师需要成为父母和祖父母、外祖父母的眼睛,让他们认识到孩子是充满好奇心、动力、能力和创造力的个体,他们在不断地寻求意义。

最后,我想强调的是,瑞吉欧教育理念不是一株可以直接从意大利移栽到中国的植物,因为它深深地扎根于当地的历史和文化土壤之中。因此,认真检视本土的历史背景和文化环境是绝对必要和值得花时间去做的的一件事情。正如霍华德·加德纳所说,如果人们想要改变自己的教育行为,他们必须首先开始观察并了解自己的环境和文化属性。⁽⁹⁾

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Retrospective Review and Contemporary Development of the Reggio Emilia Early Childhood Educational System: An Interview with Carolyn Pope Edwards

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【Abstract】Dr. Carolyn Pope Edwards, a professor at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and co author of the book *One Hundred Languages of Children*, has long been an expert in the Reggio Emilia early childhood educational approach. We conducted an interview with Dr. Edwards and, from the perspective of historical retrospective and contemporary development, reviewed the accomplishments that the Reggio Emilia early childhood educational system has achieved. The interview includes discussions on the core educational value, the theories and practices of curriculum and teaching, the role of teachers and professional development, atelier and atelierista, documentation and educational assessment and even the use of digital technology. Upon the request by the interviewers, Dr. Edwards also provides helpful suggestions and expresses hopes for Chinese educators who are interested in studying and adopting the Reggio Emilia education approach.

【Keywords】Reggio Emilia; early childhood educational system; retrospective review; contemporary development; suggestions and hopes